



# NEWS RELEASE

**Today's Date:** Thursday, April 25, 2013

**District:** 05 – Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CALTRANS WORKERS HIT THE HIGHWAYS TO CLEAN UP CALIFORNIA

**SACRAMENTO** - Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty, members of the executive management team and maintenance workers are out on highways statewide picking up trash today and are asking all Californians for their help in the battle against litter.

Today alone, Caltrans expects to haul away more than 2,500 cubic yards of trash, sweep nearly 100 tons of debris off state highways, and remove more than 16,000 square feet of graffiti.

"Caltrans is committed to a clean and litter-free California, but we can't do it alone. Everyone should think about what happens when they toss trash out of their vehicles onto our highways," said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty. "Litter costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year to clean up. That's money that could be better spent on transportation projects."

Last year, Caltrans spent \$52 million on litter removal, collecting enough litter, trash, and debris from freeways to fill more than 10,000 garbage trucks. Parked end-to-end, those trucks would stretch more than 50 miles. "The amount of taxpayer dollars that are used for picking up litter could be better spent on our state highway infrastructure," said Caltrans District 5 Director Tim Gubbins.

Today at noon, Caltrans will join Keep California Beautiful, California Highway Patrol, CalRecycle, Department of Toxic Substances Control, CalEPA, California Department of General Services, and California State and Consumer Services Agency on the west steps of the State Capitol for the 7th Annual *California Statewide Litter Collection, Enforcement, and Beautification Day*.

Caltrans' Parolee Program, established jointly in 2009 with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, supplements the state's anti-litter efforts. The program reduces recidivism rates among parolees by providing up to three months of employment after their release from jail. Since 2009, parolees have removed more than 50,000 cubic yards of litter from highways, equivalent to 31,000 garbage trucks.

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One way the public can help is by participating in Caltrans' Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) Program. To become a volunteer or support the program through a paid sponsorship, call 1-866-ADOPT-A-HWY or go to: <http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov>. Currently, nearly 13,000 volunteers participate in the AAH Program, saving taxpayers an estimated \$16 million annually in litter removal costs.

Cigarette butts are the number one item littered in California - they are discarded by the millions, often causing roadside fires, clogging storm drains, and threatening water quality. Much trash also comes from illegal dumping and improperly secured and uncovered loads. Motorists face injury and even death as the result of debris (ladders, sofas, etc.) that falls from vehicles hauling unsecured loads.

